

Aylesbury United 0, Wycombe Wanderers 0

WYCOMBE somehow survived intense pressure in the first 20 minutes and in the end deservedly earned a draw from their friendly visit to Southern League side Aylesbury United on Tuesday, writes **MICHAEL KNOX**.

For the first part of the match Wanderers did not know whether they were coming or going. And this was quite understandable for a late change in fixtures meant that on the Wycombe side only the players and officials knew where they were playing.

When the visit to Kingstonian was postponed because of an FA Trophy replay, Wycombe fixed up a friendly at home to local rivals Burnham. But late on Monday evening the Athenian League club said they could not play.

After a few quick telephone calls, it was decided instead to visit Aylesbury, whose game against Trowbridge was also called off because of a Trophy replay.

Overall the match proved a useful work out for both sides, as it was played at a fierce pace throughout — an unusual feature in friendlies.

Most of the pressure was set by the home side who clearly felt they had something to prove after last season's 3-0 Floodlight League defeat on the ground. Blues, who were clearly not so keyed up, hardly knew what hit them in the opening quarter.

ESCAPES

During that time the Blues goal survived two remarkable escapes. The first came after 15 minutes when Kevin Tilley struck the underside of the bar with a fierce 20 yard free-kick. The ball rebounded to Leo Markham whose header was tipped over the bar by Peter Spittle.

Then shortly afterwards, Aylesbury centre forward Ray Ball, running on to a great through pass, struck a post with Spittle completely beaten.

Wycombe, who used the game to field some of the less worked members of the squad, weathered the storm and forced several corners before half-time. From one of them Garry Fowles headed on to the top of the bar.

At half-time Steve Hardwick came on to replace skipper Mick

Holifield, taking a well deserved rest. With Hardwick's class in mid-field Wycombe fared better in the second half without ever threatening to score a goal.

STRUGGLING

Their closest effort came when Howard Kennedy's cross-cum-shot from the right, found goalkeeper Vince Mazurek struggling, and hit the crossbar. Mazurek later made a fine diving save from John Priestley's shot and was generally the busier of the two goalkeepers in the second half.

In his first match since injuring his ankle against Slough, Steve

Long limped off midway through the half to be replaced by Dylan Evans, who himself has been suffering from bruised ribs.

One bright spot was that no further Wycombe player was added to the ever lengthening casualty list, although Terry Scott, who enjoyed a good match, did have to receive attention for a nose bleed.

AYLESBURY UTD: V. Mazurek; R. Lucas, C. Austin, A. Maca, L. Markham, K. Tilley, G. Huxley, C. Wilkins, A. Coe, R. Ball (sub C. Darvill 45 mins), D. O'Reilly.

WYCOMBE: P. Spittle; D. Allanson, R. Davies, G. Fowles, A. Phillips, J. Priestley, L. Reed, M. Holifield (sub S. Hardwick 45 mins), S. Long (D. Evans 65 mins), H. Kennedy, T. Scott.

Harris joins Maidenhead

DEREK Harris, the Wycombe Wanderers striker put on the transfer list six weeks ago, signed in midweek for Maidenhead United for a fee of £450.

This is not the first offer there has been for Harris. But it is the first to satisfy both the player and Wycombe, who have thus cut their playing staff from 18 to 17.

After a brief spell at Loakes Park four years ago, Harris joined Isthmian League side Southall and proved such a successful scorer there that when Ian Pearson left Wycombe to join Millwall at the start of last season, Harris was an obvious replacement.

But he never lived up to that promise and scored only 14 goals in cup and league last year. When Stewart Atkins signed on this season, it was clear that Harris would struggle to find a regular place in the side.

However, because of Atkins injury, Harris turned out in nine league matches, scoring two goals — including one in the

thrilling 4-1 victory at Enfield. Maidenhead manager Geoff Anthony will be hoping that he can recover his form at a lower level.

Wycombe will aim to return to their winning ways tomorrow (Saturday) when they entertain lowly Carshalton Athletic, who have yet to record their first league win of the season.

Once again Blues have their injury problems. Steve Long aggravated an ankle injury in Tuesday's friendly against Aylesbury, while Paul Birdseye's bruised back, is taking a long time to heal. Atkins is beginning to respond to treatment to his hamstring, but goalkeeper John Maskell's pinched nerve in his leg is making little improvement.

Return to form

BURNHAM Reserves returned to winning form when beating Edgware Reserves 3-1 in Saturday's Middlesex Border League match. Burnham scorers were Ray Barber (2) and Ian Gould.